



Sarcocystis (Rice Breast)



What is Sarcocystis?

A protozoan parasite infection. The life cycle for this parasite includes a definitive carnivore host and an intermediate (prey) host.

Where is Sarcocystis found?

Sarcocystis spp. are found globally and can infect a wide range of hosts. In Wyoming, *Sarcocystis* is seen sporadically in waterfowl.

How is it spread?

An infected carnivore host sheds sporocysts through feces which are then consumed by an intermediate host. Inside the intermediate host, the parasite forms a cyst within muscle tissue which can then be consumed by another carnivore to repeat the cycle.

What are some clinical signs of disease?

No outward clinical signs seen in the majority of cases, generally causes little to no harm in the host. White/tan grain-like cysts seen throughout muscle tissue, typically seen in the breast meat of birds.

How does this disease affect me?

Humans are not at risk from *Sarcocystis spp.* found in wildlife.

Information for outdoor recreationists:

Cooking meat thoroughly to a temperature of at least 158°F can kill the parasite, although it is not recommended to eat obviously infected animals. Never feed infected meat to your pets.

For additional information on *Sarcocystis* or any other wildlife disease, please contact the WGFD Wildlife Health Laboratory at 307-745-5865.